Concerns: Lung Disease

People with HIV are diagnosed with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease at a much younger age, study suggests.

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People living with HIV develop chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) more often and at younger ages than their HIV-negative counterparts, according to recent research. COPD is an inflammatory lung disease that leads to obstructed air-flow and difficulty breathing. Researchers studied more than 1,800 HIV-positive and 1.17 million HIV-negative people newly diagnosed with COPD in Ontario. They found that people with HIV were diagnosed with COPD at a median age of 50, which is 12 years younger than those without the virus. What's more, the annual COPD diagnosis rate was 34% higher among people with HIV, and the difference was even greater for HIV-positive women. The researchers think one major contributing factor is the fact that people with HIV are more likely to smoke. Preventing and managing lung disease is especially important now, as people with preexisting lung problems are more likely to develop severe COVID-19, the respiratory disease caused by the new coronavirus.

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